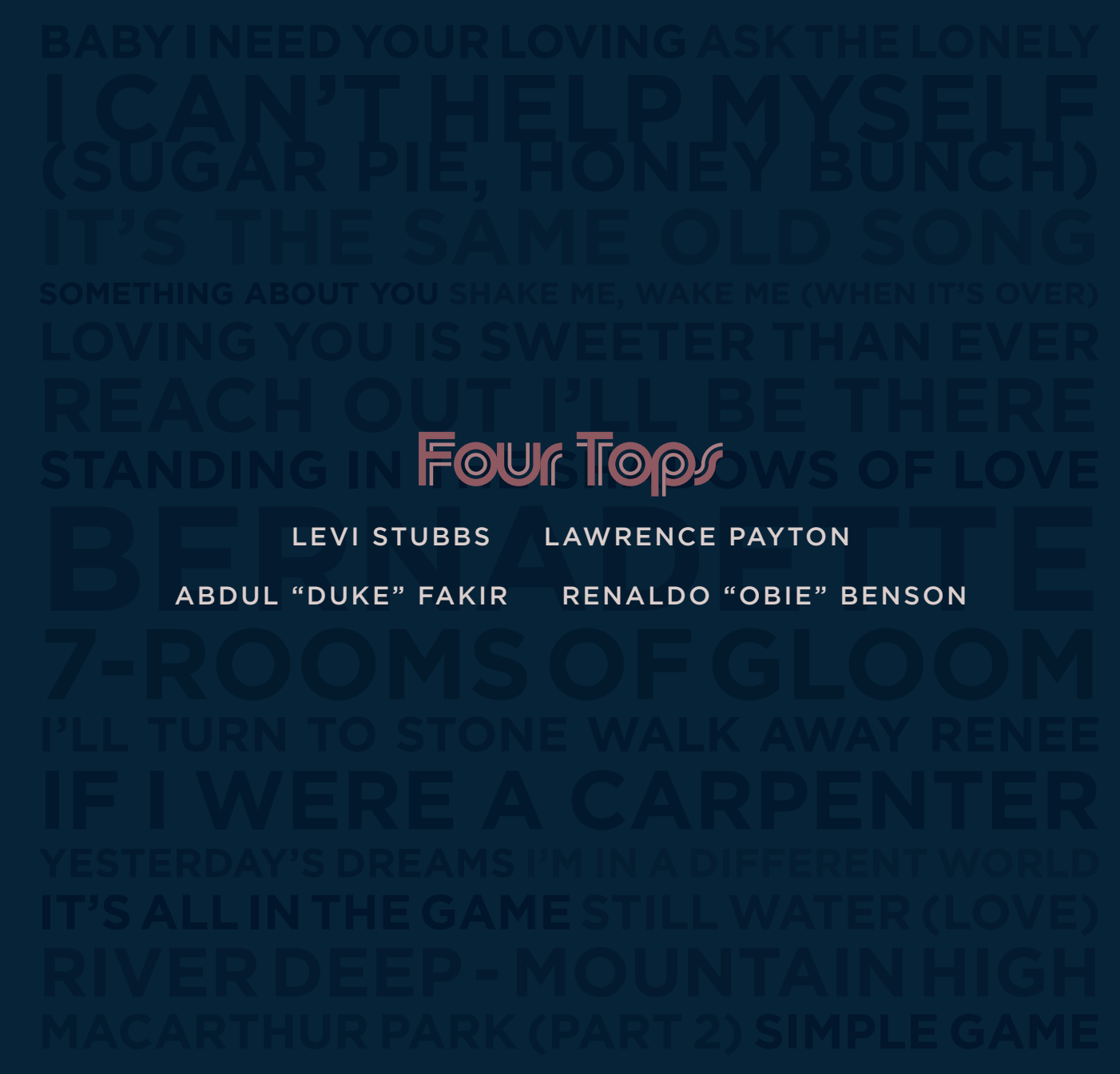
Four Tops

50th ANNIVERSARY | The Singles Collection | 1964-1972


BABY I NEED YOUR LOVING ASK THE LONELY
I CAN'T HELP MYSELF
(SUGAR PIE, HONEY BUNCH)
IT'S THE SAME OLD SONG
SOMETHING ABOUT YOU SHAKE ME, WAKE ME (WHEN IT'S OVER)
LOVING YOU IS SWEETER THAN EVER
REACH OUT I'LL BE THERE
STANDING IN THE SHADOWS OF LOVE
BERNADETTE
Four Tops
LEVI STUBBS LAWRENCE PAYTON
ABDUL "DUKE" FAKIR RENALDO "OBIE" BENSON
7-ROOMS OF GLOOM
I'LL TURN TO STONE WALK AWAY RENEE
IF I WERE A CARPENTER
YESTERDAY'S DREAMS I'M IN A DIFFERENT WORLD
IT'S ALL IN THE GAME STILL WATER (LOVE)
RIVER DEEP - MOUNTAIN HIGH
MACARTHUR PARK (PART 2) SIMPLE GAME

DISC 1

1. **Baby I Need Your Loving**
   (Brian Holland-Lamont Dozier-Edward Holland Jr.)
   Produced by Brian Holland and Lamont Dozier
   Track recorded April 10, 1964, assigned to Holland-Dozier; re-assigned to Four Tops and vocals dubbed in May 7, 1964

2. **Call On Me**
   (Brian Holland-Lamont Dozier-Edward Holland Jr.)
   Produced by Brian Holland and Lamont Dozier
   Recorded May 20, 1964

Motown M 1062, July 10, 1964
#4 R&B*, #11 Pop

Levi Stubbs, Abdul "Duke" Fakir, Lawrence Payton and Renaldo "Obie" Benson first performed together at a Detroit neighborhood party in 1954 — teenagers discovering, and bonding over, a distinctive harmonic blend. "We're the Four Aims," they decided, until their mentor, Roquel "Billy" Davis — later to be Berry Gordy's first songwriting partner — posed a crucial question.

"The Aims? Like The Ames Brothers?" he asked, referring to a popular fifties vocal group.

"No," the guys said, "we're aiming for the top."

"Then you're the Four Tops," Davis replied.

With Davis's help the Tops got a deal with Chess Records in Chicago. Nothing happened with their lone single, or with brief stints at Columbia or Riverside Records. They made their bones on the road, toiling in supper clubs all over the East and Midwest, sometimes backing the legendary vocalist and bandleader Billy Eckstine. The Tops were offered a Motown contract but their attorney turned it down. Then in late 1962 the group, after hustling an appearance on NBC-TV's *Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson*, got Motown founder Berry Gordy to deliver them a deal they couldn't resist.

Mickey Stevenson, Motown's head of A&R who was also running the company's Workshop Jazz imprint, saw the Tops as the label's marquee act and had them record standards in a small-group setting. But the result, a proposed Workshop album, *Breaking Through*, was cancelled. The group had been at it for 10 years. Was this the end?

Brian Holland didn't think so, urging the Tops to come to the studio after a late-night show at the 20 Grand nightclub. He had a love song, written to his wife, and though it was initially tagged for Johnny Nash — who was contemplating a move to Motown from Chess at the time — he saw it as a fit for the guys. They cut "Baby I Need Your Loving" at three o'clock in the morning, and the Tops were on their way.

"Baby I Need Your Loving" was re-recorded at Motown by the Supremes, Gladys Knight & The Pips, Marvin Gaye and Kim Weston, and Marvin and Tammi Terrell. Outside Motown its best-known pop cover was by Johnny Rivers, who took it to No. 3 pop in 1967.

Payton, the group's vocal arranger, gets the lead on "Call On Me," a favorite Motown B-side that became another when covered in 1966 by Shorty Long, who made his version the flip of "Function At The Junction."

3. Without The One You Love (Life's Not Worthwhile)

(Brian Holland-Lamont Dozier-Edward Holland Jr.)

Produced by Brian Holland and Lamont Dozier

Working Title: You Know I Love You Girl

Track recorded August 26, 1964; various overdubs recorded August 28, September 7, 17, 22 & 30, and October 2 & 19, 1964

4. Love Has Gone

(Brian Holland-Lamont Dozier-Edward Holland Jr.)

Produced by Brian Holland and Lamont Dozier

Working Title: My Love Has Gone

Recorded September 10, 1964; overdubs recorded September 12, 1964

Motown M 1069, November 4, 1964

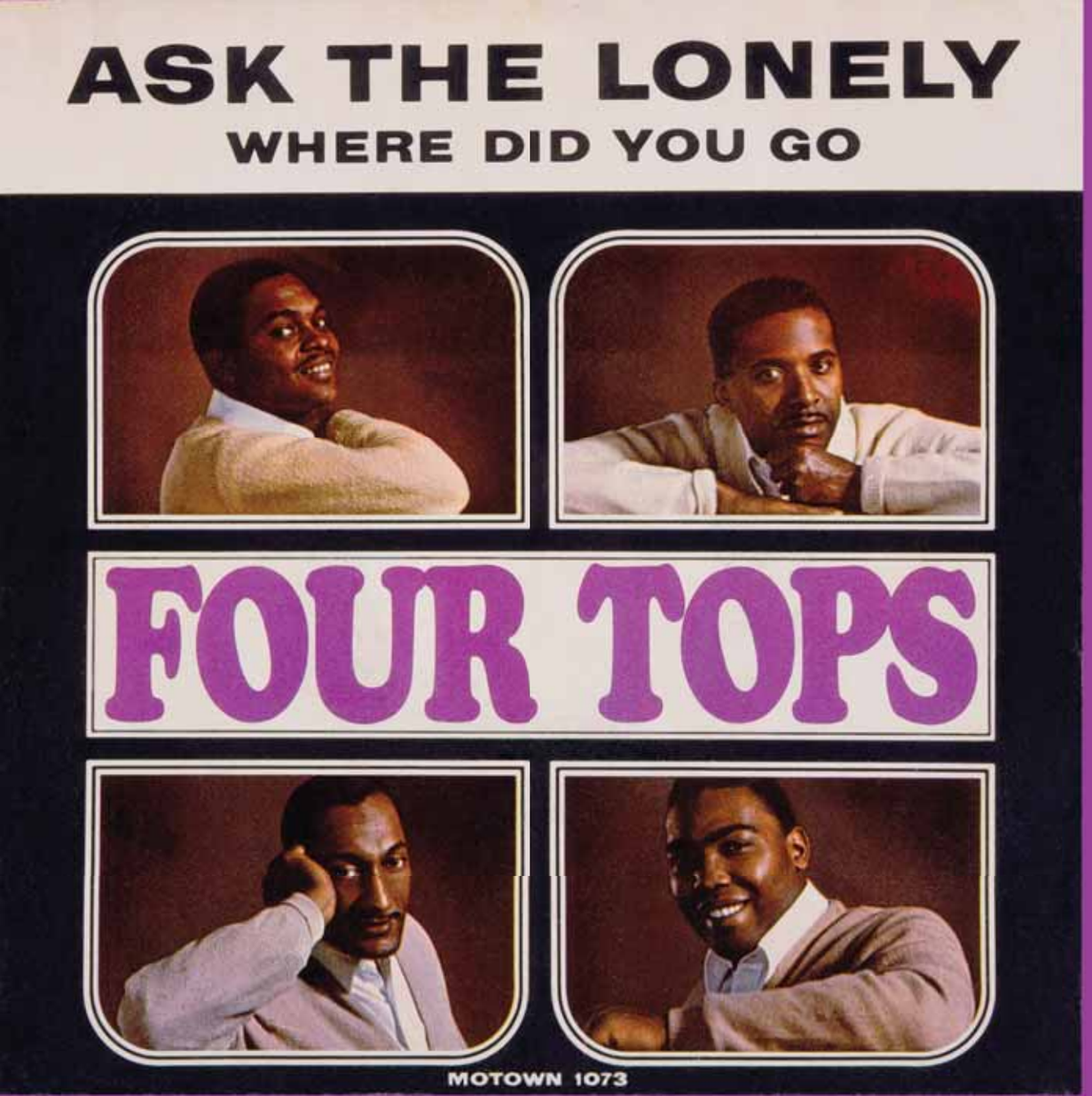
#17 R&B*, #43 Pop

One of the great strengths of Holland-Dozier-Holland was their ability to make a follow-up to a hit sound like both a continuation and a variation on that artist's theme: it's no accident that "Without The One You Love" opens with the words "Baby I need your good lovin.'"

Once again, for distinct harmonies H-D-H expertly blend the Tops with the Andantes, Motown's staff female background singers. "We put the girls with them to make their sound different from the Temptations or anybody else," says Dozier, "so that when you heard the Four Tops, you would also hear these fabulous singers mixed in, and that became their signature sound."

"Love Has Gone" is a relaxed, luxurious ballad. H-D-H let the groove breathe, affording room for Stubbs' inconsolable voice. For a veteran quartet that arrived at Motown primed to sing jazz and pop standards, the Four Tops got the hang of soul music fast.

The Tops recut "Without The One You Love" with the Jean Terrell-led Supremes in 1970, when it appeared on their first album of duets, *The Magnificent 7*. (See Disc 3.)



5. Ask The Lonely

(William "Mickey" Stevenson-Ivy Jo Hunter)

Produced by William "Mickey" Stevenson and Ivy Jo Hunter

Track and Ivy Jo Hunter demo vocal recorded June 26, 1964, assigned to Tommy Good; strings overdubbed July 8, 1964; Four Tops overdubbed August 12, 1964

6. Where Did You Go

(Brian Holland-Lamont Dozier-Edward Holland Jr.)

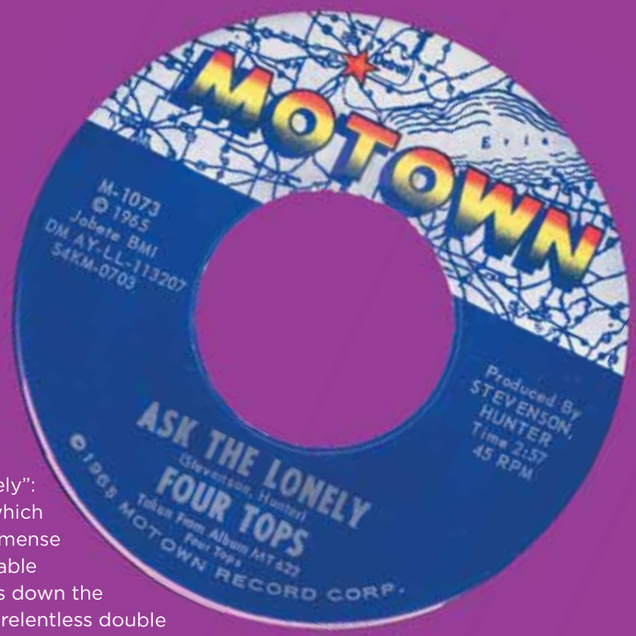
Produced by Brian Holland and Lamont Dozier

Working Title: They Look Good Together

Recorded May 20, 1964; overdubs recorded September 6 & 12, 1964

Motown MT 1073, January 5, 1965

#9 R&B, #24 Pop



"Baby I Need Your Loving," "Without The One You Love" and, leading off 1965, "Ask The Lonely": a three-song cycle of lost love, a narrative at which the Tops were simply great, pointing to the immense care Motown producers took to create identifiable themes for their artists. "Ask The Lonely" slows down the tempo slightly, with bassist James Jamerson's relentless double beat giving the number additional rhythmic tension.

Levi Stubbs, backed by the guys and the Andantes — that's soprano Louvain Demps on the high notes — emotes with heart-tugging anguish, a specialty of co-producer Ivy Jo Hunter.

"A lot of people could identify with it, even though it wasn't a chart-burner," says Hunter. He recalls completing the song's moving storyline in a hurry. "I hadn't finished the lyrics, and everyone was downstairs in the studio [waiting]. I wrote it in about 15 minutes."

A version of "Ask The Lonely" mistakenly attributed to Tommy Good appears on the rarities album *Motown Sings Motown Treasures*; the singer is actually Ivy Jo Hunter, performing a demo for Good.

7. **I Can't Help Myself (Sugar Pie, Honey Bunch)**
(Brian Holland-Lamont Dozier-Edward Holland Jr.)
Produced by Brian Holland and Lamont Dozier
Track recorded March 31, 1965;
additional recording including vocals April 8 & 9, 1965

8. **Sad Souvenirs**
(William "Mickey" Stevenson-Ivy Jo Hunter)
Produced by William "Mickey" Stevenson and Ivy Jo Hunter
Track recorded July 16, 1964, assigned to Marv Johnson;
Four Tops dubbed in August 17, 1964

9. **I Can't Help Myself (Sugar Pie, Honey Bunch)** [second version]
(Brian Holland-Lamont Dozier-Edward Holland Jr.)
Produced by Brian Holland and Lamont Dozier

Motown M 1076, April 23, 1965
#1 R&B, #1 Pop

A change of direction for the group: a hard-edged dance number, showcasing Levi in a raw Southern soul voice. On bass, James Jamerson never lets up for a moment, playing a much-copied monster pattern; Mike Terry slips in a brief yet characteristic baritone sax solo; while the vocal background lines are all in unison: everything clear and distinct, owing somewhat to the new eight-track recording system Motown put in place earlier in the year.

"When the Four Tops recorded 'I Can't Help Myself,'" Motown engineer Harold Taylor recalled, "people were banging on the door of the studio; they were so ecstatic about what they heard."

Except for Levi Stubbs, who asked Brian Holland for another take. "OK, we'll do it again tomorrow," Brian told him. As Levi has recounted many times, "It turned out there was no tomorrow."

The song's parenthetical hook line evoked Lamont Dozier's Detroit childhood.

"The inspiration came from my grandfather, watching him as women came to my grandmother's house to have their hair done at her home salon," he says. "He was always a bit of a flirt, so when he'd be welcoming the people in, he had this little devilish look in his eye, and he'd say, 'Good morning, sugar pie, good morning, honey bunch!'"

"I Can't Help Myself" was so hot that Motown secured additional pressing plants to meet demand. In doing so they delivered a second mix, by George Gordy, with some differences to Brian Holland's original single mix. Both are included here.

Earl Van Dyke dubbed solo piano onto the Tops' band track for "I Can't Help Myself," which became a non-LP single later in the year. The Supremes cut a version for their 1966 *Supremes A Go-Go* album. Donnie Elbert, who previously hit with a cover of H-D-H's "Where Did Our Love Go," had a mild hit with "I Can't Help Myself" on Avco in 1972. Back at Motown, Bonnie Pointer reached the Top 40 with her version in 1980 — a cover that included Earl Van Dyke on piano.

"Sad Souvenirs" was taken from their debut album, which had been released back in January 1965. The Isley Brothers covered it and their version first surfaced on the U.K. album *Tamla Motown Present The Isley Brothers* in 1972. Marvin Gaye recorded the song as well, though it remained unreleased until his 1994 rarities collection *Love Starved Heart*.

10. It's The Same Old Song

(Brian Holland-Lamont Dozier-Edward Holland Jr.)
Produced by Brian Holland and Lamont Dozier
Track recorded May 13, 1965; additional recording May 20 (strings) and July 7 (vocals), 1965

11. Your Love Is Amazing

(Brian Holland-Lamont Dozier-Edward Holland Jr.)
Produced by Brian Holland and Lamont Dozier
Working Title: It's So Amazing What Your Love Can Do
Track recorded June 4, 1964, assigned to Eddie Holland; Four Tops recorded September 12, 1964

12. It's The Same Old Song [second version]

(Brian Holland-Lamont Dozier-Edward Holland Jr.)
Produced by Brian Holland and Lamont Dozier

Motown M 1081, July 9, 1965
#2 R&B, #5 Pop

On Wednesday, July 7, 1965, "I Can't Help Myself (Sugar Pie, Honey Bunch")" was sitting atop the Pop record charts. Word leaked back to Motown that Columbia Records planned to draft off the record's success with a "Motown Sound" remix of a Four Tops single, "Ain't That Love," originally released as a B-side in 1960. Motown president Berry Gordy sent down the edict to get a new Four Tops record out, *now*. With a remarkable efficiency that had become routine, in 48 hours the company recorded, mixed and sent to radio "It's The Same Old Song." It quickly hit the national top 10.

"Ain't That Love," which entered the *Billboard* chart the same day as "Same Old Song," debuted at No. 93 and then disappeared. Not long after, Motown cancelled their deal with Columbia's pressing plant, which had been in play since "Shop Around" in 1960.

"It's The Same Old Song" was a bold, happy sequel to "I Can't Help Myself," with its title a sly comment on the similarities between the two. Two mixes of it were shipped: an initial one by Robert Gordy and another by Brian Holland. The song was covered by the Supremes on their 1967 LP *Sing Holland-Dozier-Holland*; by Jonathan King in 1971, which peaked at No. 19 U.K.; by K.C. & the Sunshine Band in '78, a top 30 pop hit; and by Third World in 1989.

"Your Love Is Amazing" was pulled from the Tops' debut album. Shorty Long recorded a version in 1967, issuing it as the B-side of his single "Chantilly Lace."

13. Something About You

(Brian Holland-Lamont Dozier-Edward Holland Jr.)
Produced by Brian Holland and Lamont Dozier
Working Title: Backslider
Track recorded June 11, 1965; additional recording July 8 (voices) and 28; lead vocal recorded August 4, 1965

14. Darling, I Hum Our Song

(Brian Holland-Lamont Dozier-Edward Holland Jr.)
Produced by Brian Holland and Lamont Dozier
Working Title: Darling, Darling
Track recorded June 2, 1965; additional recording June 7 (voices) and July 22 (lead vocals), 1965

Motown M 1084, October 21, 1965
#9 R&B, #19 Pop

"Something About You" was the Four Tops' third up-tempo A-side in a row: the fast numbers were going to keep coming for a couple more years. Tom-toms set the pulsing beat right from the very start, vibes and bass keep a syncopated rhythm going, and some fine horn work by Andrew "Mike" Terry rounds off this classic dance floor filler. Not a string player in sight and Levi Stubbs leaps in like his hair is on fire. The remaining three Tops take their time joining harmony; they are later augmented by the Andantes.

It wasn't a big hit but the Tops opened their live show with it for many years; the rock duo LeBlanc & Carr hit the top 50 with their cover on Big Tree in 1977.

"Darling, I Hum Our Song" had already appeared twice before on a Motown 45. Eddie Holland issued it on the plug side in 1962; Martha & the Vandellas had their version on the flip of "Quicksand" in 1963. The Tops' version is clearly the most energetic of the three.

Both Tops tracks were included on their *Second Album*, released November 1965.

15. Shake Me, Wake Me (When It's Over)

(Brian Holland-Lamont Dozier-Edward Holland Jr.)

Produced by Brian Holland and Lamont Dozier

Working Title: Without My Baby

Track recorded October 19, 1965; strings overdubbed November 4, 1965; vocals recorded January 6, 1966

16. Just As Long As You Need Me

(Brian Holland-Lamont Dozier-Edward Holland Jr.)

Produced by Brian Holland and Lamont Dozier

Working Title: You Can Count On Me

Track recorded March 6, 1964, assigned to Holland and Dozier; Four Tops vocals recorded June 8 and July 28, 1965; strings overdubbed June 17; lead vocal recorded August 3, 1965

Motown M 1090, February 2, 1966

#5 R&B, #18 Pop

Once again H-D-H could do no wrong. Here, the low-end piano intro pulses like an elevated heartbeat before Levi leaps into the fray; the restless doubled bass line underlines the "long and sleepless night" of the lyrics, painting a haunting picture of a man whose woman is leaving "for the love of a stranger." Levi's aching voice — aching chiefly because the higher notes are barely in reach — is clearly that of someone wracked by nightmares and paranoid fears. It's ironic, then, that this is one of Motown's greatest floor-fillers.

"Just As Long As You Need Me," taken from *Second Album*, is a slower but equally infectious dance number. With its irresistible sing-along title line, the track raises the roof of many a Northern Soul all-nighter.

A month after the release of this single, the Tops — and Motown — swept *Record World* magazine's Rhythm & Blues Awards. "I Can't Help Myself" was voted the top song of the year, and the Tops were voted top male vocal group of 1965, with the Miracles and the Temptations following at second and third, respectively. Jr. Walker & the All Stars were the instrumental act of the year. The Elgins were voted most promising newcomers.

17. Loving You Is Sweeter Than Ever

(Ivy Jo Hunter-Stevie Wonder)

Produced by Ivy Jo Hunter

Track and vocals recorded April 5, 1966; strings overdubbed April 14, 1966

18. I Like Everything About You

(Brian Holland-Lamont Dozier-Edward Holland Jr.)

Produced by Brian Holland and Lamont Dozier

Working Title: Too Late To Cry

Track recorded August 28, 1964, assigned to and recorded by Eddie Holland; backgrounds recorded June 7, 1965; lead dubbed in July 22, 1965

Motown M 1096, May 9, 1966

#12 R&B, #45 Pop

Ivy Jo Hunter managed to steal the Tops away from H-D-H for "Loving You Is Sweeter Than Ever," on which he is blessed with the unique rhythm section of co-composer Stevie Wonder, then 15 years old, on drums, and James Jamerson, whose bubbling bass line is full of passing notes and sudden stop beats. Hunter keeps the song well within Levi's range, allowing us to hear how melodic a singer he can be; Levi gets to stretch and soar.

"That track changed Holland-Dozier's whole rhythm pattern," said Ivy Jo, who admitted he was unhappy with the final mix. "Everything you heard from Holland and Dozier after that, what kind of rhythm did it have? 'Dum-bum-bum-de-bum-de-bum-bump!'"

"Loving You Is Sweeter Than Ever" was the Tops' biggest hit in the U.K. to date, reaching No. 21. In the same month it was released in the U.S., H-D-H received eight BMI songwriting awards, and Jobete Music received an additional twelve.

Eddie Holland originally cut "I Like Everything About You," and his version, after circulating in collectors' circles on acetate, is now available on the 2-CD collection *It Moves Me: The Complete Recordings 1958-1964*. Eddie is a high tenor, Levi Stubbs a baritone, so when dubbing onto Eddie's track Levi was forced above his range; listen for him choking out the words *"I like it"* at 0:44. Chuck Jackson recorded the song within his own range in 1968 for his first Motown album, *Chuck Jackson Arrives!*

19. Reach Out I'll Be There

(Brian Holland-Lamont Dozier-Edward Holland Jr.)

Produced by Brian Holland and Lamont Dozier

Track recorded July 8, 1966; various vocal dub-ins July 21, 26 and July 27, 1966

20. Until You Love Someone

(Brian Holland-Lamont Dozier-Edward Holland Jr.)

Produced by Brian Holland and Lamont Dozier

Track recorded December 3, 1964, assigned to Sammy Turner; vocals recorded June 7 and August 5, 1965

Motown M 1098, August 18, 1966

#1 R&B, #1 Pop

" I'll Be There" is a quantum leap for Motown: flutes, oboes and Arabian drums, plus an utterly killer vocal lead from Levi Stubbs. Don Waller writes in his book *The Motown Story*, "About two-thirds of the way through, Levi Stubbs yells 'Just look over your shoulder!' and in that split second of total abandon, the whole Eddie Holland-Lamont Dozier-Brian Holland construction crystallizes and explodes. That's what makes you remember it and that's what makes it a great record."

A great record with a fascinating Bob Dylan connection, as Lamont Dozier admitted to Marc Weingarten. "Dylan was happening at the time, and the phrasing for '[Reach Out] I'll Be There' came from listening to the way he sang," he said. "He'd do that thing (sings), 'Heyy' and 'Hoeww,' where he'd drag a phrase out, that I liked. The day we wrote it, I just began mumbling: 'Now if you feel that you can't *go onnn*, because all of your hope is *gonnne*...'

"Brian took it from there and came up with the chorus. We kept the melody simple, because Levi had a powerful voice, and we didn't want the melody and the lyric to be fighting each other. There was a big gospel influence, the way the melody would swell and build and then peak at certain times. Levi just knew instinctively when to release and when to swell — when to move from one part to the other."

Yet the Tops were skeptical, and the record was nearly rejected at the weekly Quality Control meeting. Berry Gordy had the last vote. "It's really different, different than anything out there in the street," he told the room. "So let's go ahead and put it out.'"

For one week in the fall of '66, Motown had three of the top five pop chart records: "You Can't Hurry Love," "Beauty Is Only Skin Deep" and "Reach Out I'll Be There." The company had three No. 1 hits during the year, down from five in 1965, but they had 22 top 20 hits, three more than the previous year. The single followed hot on the release of *On Top*, the Tops' fourth Motown album, where "Until You Love Someone" was taken from side one. "Until" was revived the following year by Chris Clark on her *Soul Sounds* LP.

21. Standing In The Shadows Of Love

(Brian Holland-Lamont Dozier-Edward Holland Jr.)

Produced by Brian Holland and Lamont Dozier

Working Title: My Search Has Ended

Track recorded October 10, 1966;
vocals recorded at Studio B (Golden World) October 19;
strings dubbed in October 27;
additional instrumentation recorded November 6, 1966

22. Since You've Been Gone

(Brian Holland-Lamont Dozier-Edward Holland Jr.)

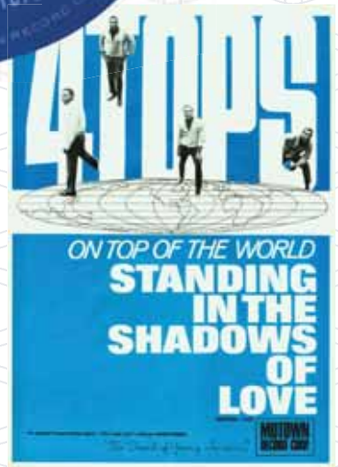
Produced by Brian Holland and Lamont Dozier

Working Titles: 1) Sons Of Thieves; 2) Can't Hold On Much Longer

Track recorded June 2, 1965; backgrounds recorded
July 8 & July 28; lead vocal recorded August 5 & 11, 1965

Motown M 1102, November 28, 1966

#2 R&B, #6 Pop

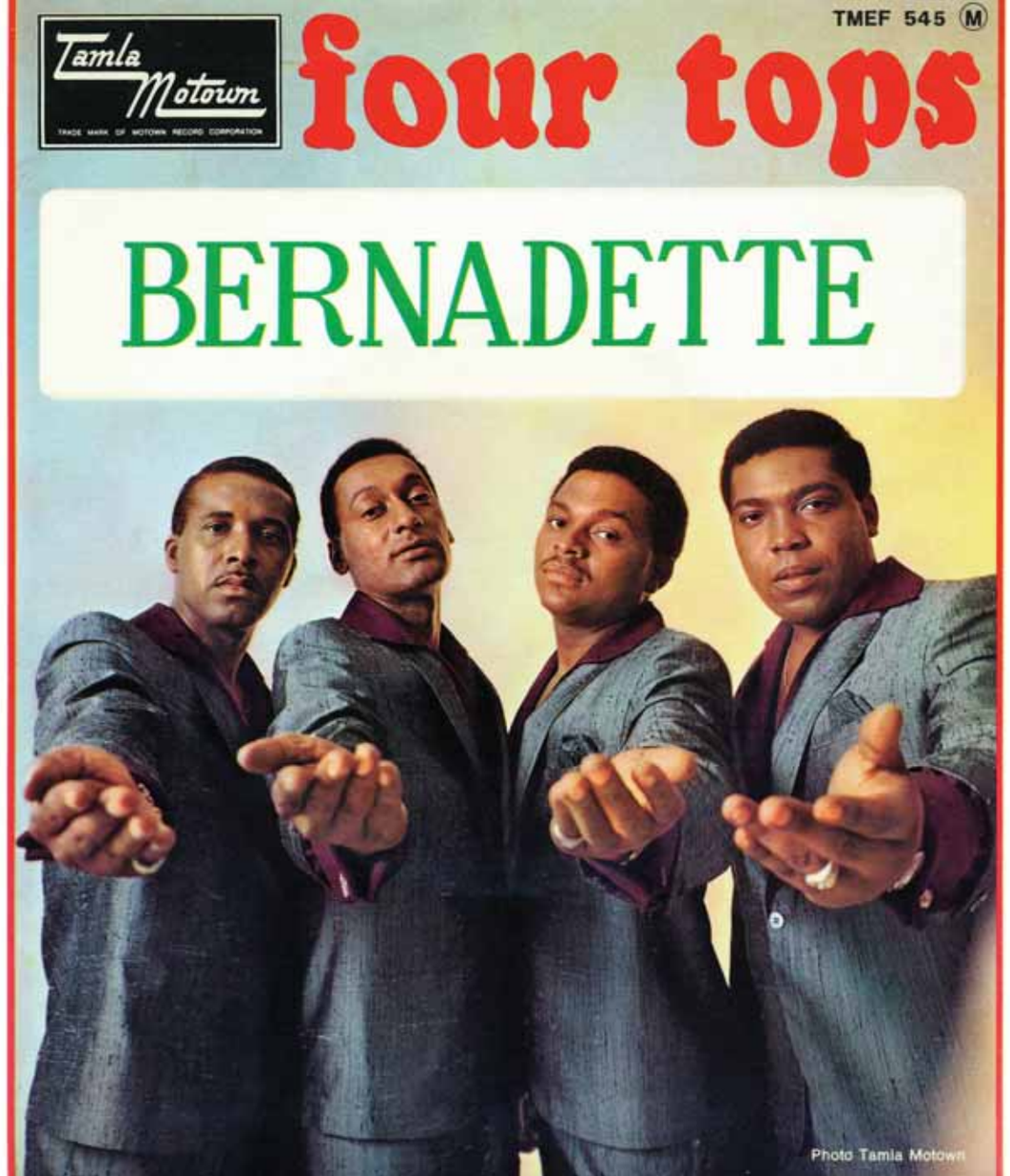


"Standing In The Shadows Of Love" is another stunner, the middle of H-D-H's dramatic three-song arc. ("Bernadette" would be the third, issued in 1967.) Levi Stubbs' vocal intensity rages from the very first syllable and never lets up, and whenever the rest of the instrumentation drops out for dramatic effect to shine the spotlight directly on Levi, Eddie "Bongo" Brown's trademark percussive thrust crackles while the Tops and Andantes are a celestial chorus echoing Stubbs' heartbreaking lament.

On its bottom James Jamerson was expanding the group's sound, he told Nelson George. "My feel was always an Eastern feel, a spiritual thing," he said. "Take 'Standing In The Shadows Of Love.' The bass line has an Arabic feel. I've been around a whole lot of people from the East, from China and Japan. Then I studied the African, Cuban and Indian scales. I brought all that with me to Motown."

Recording the vocal tracks marked a landmark in the Motown timeline: the first company session at Golden World, a label and studio operation formerly owned by Ed Wingate, where several of the Funk Brothers had moonlighted. Berry Gordy had taken possession of Wingate's assets the month before, which included the Ric-Tic and Golden World imprints and the recording studio on Davison Avenue. A few Golden World artists, including Edwin Starr, and a recording engineer, Russ Terrana, joined Motown.

"Since You've Been Gone" was another highlight of the previous year's *Second Album*. Martha Reeves & the Vandellas covered it in 1967, but their version remained unreleased until *Spellbound*, the 2-CD Lost & Found collection, was issued in 2005.



23. Bernadette

(Brian Holland-Lamont Dozier-Edward Holland Jr.)

Produced by Brian Holland and Lamont Dozier

Track recorded December 14, 1966; additional recording January 24; lead vocal recorded January 25, 1967

24. I Got A Feeling

(Brian Holland-Lamont Dozier-Edward Holland Jr.)

Produced by Brian Holland and Lamont Dozier

Track recorded April 5, 1966; overdubs recorded April 6; strings recorded April 14, 1966

Motown M 1104, February 16, 1967

R&B #3, Pop #4

"Bernadette" is the third belter in H-D-H's great trilogy, following "Reach Out I'll Be There" and "Standing In The Shadows Of Love."

To Lamont Dozier, Bernadette "was a beautiful Italian girl with eyes for somebody else. She inspired a lot of feelings. I never told her, but I used those feelings for writing songs. She was my muse."

Says Brian Holland: "I was dating a girl named Bernadette. That was her middle name, Miriam Bernadette Martin. Edward had a girl named Bernadette. And we never knew it. [Each of] those girls thought that song was about her. It finally came out years later, [when] we were talking in an interview."

Phil Spector called the effect of "Bernadette," like "Reach Out I'll Be There," "a black man singing Bob Dylan." Rock writer Dave Marsh pointed out [that] "when Levi Stubbs sings 'They pre-tend to be my friend,' his cadence is just as Dylanesque as anything that ever came from the mouths of the Byrds or Manfred Mann."

One of the song's great hooks is the off-time, false ending, where Levi shouts the girl's name. No matter how long you study it, you can't join him in sync, an affect Berry Gordy did not endorse. The unusual meter was accepted once Brian Holland told his boss, "I want to throw the listener off. I want to give them something to think about."

The Andantes and the Originals join the Tops' background voices. Louvain Demps, the Andantes' high soprano, says it was one of the few sessions of the era where everyone, from the producers to the singers, the Funk Brothers to the strings, were all crammed into Hitsville's small Studio A.

Northern Soul favorite "I Got A Feeling" had previously appeared on the Tops' album, *On Top*, in 1966. Barbara Randolph covered the song for her debut Motown single later in the year.

In Britain, where EPs — extended-play, seven-inch 45 rpm records, typically containing four tracks — were more common than in the U.S., the Four Tops' *Hits* EP was released in March, and went almost immediately to No. 1, where it stayed for an incredible 22 weeks.

25. 7-Rooms Of Gloom

(Brian Holland-Lamont Dozier-Edward Holland Jr.)

Produced by Brian Holland and Lamont Dozier

Recorded October 24, 1966; track recut November 2, 1966; additional recording November 6, 1966; lead vocal recorded January 23, 1967

26. I'll Turn To Stone

(Brian Holland-Lamont Dozier-Edward Holland Jr.-R. Dean Taylor)

Produced by Brian Holland and Lamont Dozier

Track recorded July 8, 1966; lead vocal recorded July 25 & 26; backgrounds July 27; strings August 6, 1966

Motown M 1110, May 4, 1967

A-side: R&B #10, Pop #14

B-side: R&B #50, Pop #76

Houses permeated with loneliness and heartbreak weren't a new lyrical conceit: Faron Young carried on a dialogue with his domicile in his 1961 smash "Hello Walls." But it hardly compared to the wall-shuddering despondency in "7-Rooms Of Gloom." Over a pummeling, minor-key backdrop that isn't far from the exotic, mid-Eastern feel of the Rolling Stones' "Paint It, Black," Levi Stubbs shrieks of his desolate, pitch-dark, silent domicile while the Tops and Andantes amplify every strand of his misery. Amazingly, Motown created a promotional music video for the song, with the Tops in a Detroit house complete with shadowy figures.

"I'll Turn To Stone" is more standard H-D-H fare, which made this release a double-sided hit as well as another Northern Soul dance floor favorite. The song was first recorded by the Supremes, and released on their *Supremes Sing Holland-Dozier-Holland* LP at the beginning of the year. Other versions by Dennis Edwards, Tammi Terrell and Barbara Randolph were to follow. The tune received more than a passing nod from writers Mike d'Abo (of Manfred Mann) and Tony Macaulay, whose "Build Me Up Buttercup," a huge 1968 hit for British interracial R&B band the Foundations, bears an uncanny resemblance to "I'll Turn To Stone."

"7-Rooms," "I'll Turn To Stone" and its three hit predecessors were included on the Tops' *Reach Out* LP, released in September.

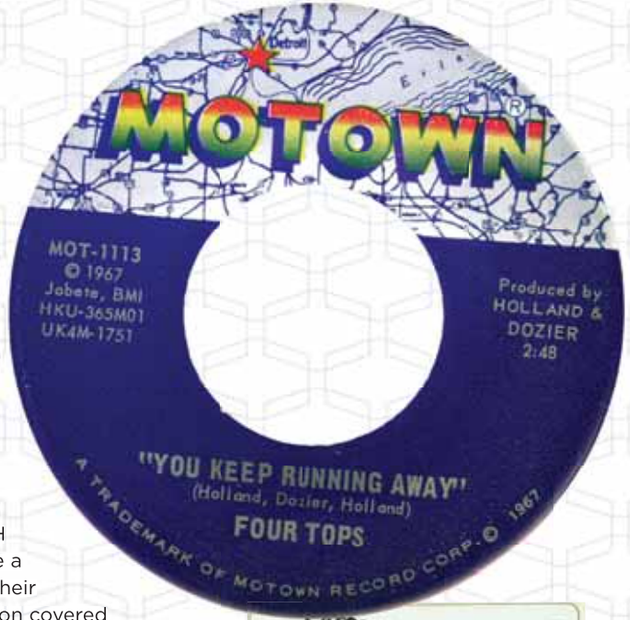
27. You Keep Running Away

(Brian Holland-Lamont Dozier-Edward Holland Jr.)
Produced by Brian Holland and Lamont Dozier
Track recorded June 15, 1967;
additional recording June 29, 1967

28. If You Don't Want My Love

(Brian Holland-Lamont Dozier-Edward Holland Jr.)
Produced by Brian Holland and Lamont Dozier
Track recorded November 30, 1966,
assigned to the Vandellas;
backgrounds recorded March 8, 1967;
lead vocal recorded August 4, 1967

Motown M 1113, August 29, 1967
#7 R&B, #19 Pop

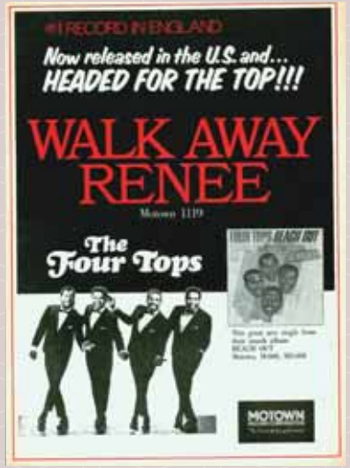


"You Keep Running Away" was the final H-D-H composition delivered to the Four Tops. While a decent-sized hit, it wasn't as adventurous as their recent run of landmark smashes. Chuck Jackson covered "You Keep Running Away" in *Goin' Back To Chuck Jackson*, a 1969 LP release, and the song was incorporated into Michael Jackson's "Maria (You Were The Only One)" in 1971.

"If You Don't Want My Love" had first been recorded and released by co-writer Eddie Holland, as the B-side of "Candy To Me," his last single for Motown. Here Levi as usual takes it to the limit, though the Andantes' pure high harmonies keep it sweet. The recording was not included on any Four Tops album at the time.

For Lamont Dozier, working in the studio with the Tops was an unadulterated thrill. "Every group in Detroit idolized the Four Tops, even before there was any Motown," he said. "They were the top of the heap as far as vocal groups go."

DISC 2



1. **Walk Away Renee**

   (Mike Lookofsky-Bob Calilli-Tony Sansone)

   Produced by Brian Holland and Lamont Dozier

   Track recorded October 6, 1966; strings recorded October 8; Tops' backgrounds recorded October 24; Andantes' backgrounds recorded October 25, 1966; lead vocal recorded January 4, 1967

2. **Your Love Is Wonderful**

   (Ivy Jo Hunter-Jack Alan Goga-Shena DeMell)

   Produced by Ivy Jo Hunter and Lawrence Payton

   Track recorded July 7, 1967; demo lead vocal recorded July 10; miscellaneous overdubs recorded July 12; background vocals recorded July 13; lead vocal recorded December 11, 1967

Motown M 1119, January 18, 1968

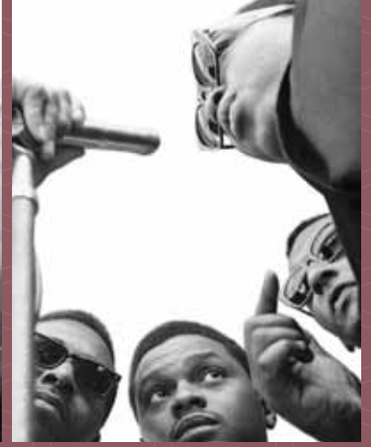
#15 R&B, #14 Pop

H-D-H were gone from Motown but their output for the Four Tops, released on LP or deep in the vault, became a resource for the company to issue as singles through the end of 1968.

From the group's *Reach Out* album came a cover of "Walk Away Renee," originally a U.S. top five hit for the Left Banke in late 1966. Holland-Dozier's production fit Levi Stubbs' yearning voice beautifully, packing more of an emotional punch than the wistful original about a real-life Renee, co-written by the group's keyboardist Michael Brown, a.k.a. Mike Lookofsky, son of renowned violinist and studio owner Harry Lookofsky who produced the Left Banke's hit. Songwriter Jimmy Webb, a former Motown staff writer who has a few classics of his own, once rated the Tops' version one of his favorite singles.

The Tops' "Walk Away Renee" was first released in the U.K., where it was a "new" song — the Left Banke version hadn't charted there — and hit No. 3. The group recorded Italian lyrics to the song later in the year, when it was released in Italy as "L'Arcobaleno" ("The Rainbow"). (See Disc 3.)

"Your Love Is Wonderful" is another B-side gem produced by Ivy Jo Hunter. It was not included on any LP, and was "lost" until the release of the Tops' 4-CD box set, *Fourever*, in 2001, when it was discovered that Tops member Lawrence Payton was the song's co-producer. Payton didn't have a producer contract at the time and therefore his name could not appear on the label.



3. If I Were A Carpenter

(Tim Hardin)

Produced by Brian Holland and Lamont Dozier

Track recorded October 6, 1966; strings overdubbed October 8; additional instrumentation recorded October 25; lead vocal recorded October 26, 1966

4. Wonderful Baby

(William Robinson)

Produced by Smokey Robinson and Pete Moore

First version: Track recorded November 11, 1964; strings overdubbed November 17; vocals recorded December 16, 1964

This version: Track recorded at Golden World, October 20, 1966; various overdubs recorded October 24; strings recorded October 27; castanets recorded October 28, 1966

Motown M 1124, April 11, 1968

#17 R&B, #20 Pop

"If I Were A Carpenter," written by singer-songwriter Tim Hardin, had been a top ten hit for Bobby Darin in 1966. The Four Tops covered it along with a batch of other then-contemporary hits, including "Walk Away Renee," for their 1967 album release *Reach Out*. Similar to "Renee," "Carpenter" was released first and charted better in the U.K., reaching No. 7.

"Wonderful Baby," an exotic production by Smokey Robinson, was also plucked from the *Reach Out* album. Smokey had revised it considerably from an earlier version he recorded twice in 1964. Compare this one to the two alternates from '64 heard on *Lost Without You*, the Tops' second Motown Lost & Found collection, released on Motown/Hip-O Select in 2005.

5. Yesterday's Dreams

(Ivy Jo Hunter-Vernon Bullock-Jack Goga-Pamela Sawyer)

Produced by Ivy Jo Hunter, Jack Goga and Lawrence

First version: Track recorded May 25, 1968; various overdubs recorded May 27; background vocals recorded May 29; strings recorded at Golden World, June 2, 1968

This version: Track recorded June 12, 1968; various overdubs recorded June 13, 1968

6. For Once In My Life

(Ronald Miller-Orlando Murden)

Produced by Frank Wilson

Track recorded in Los Angeles, date unknown; lead vocal recorded May 23, 1966; background vocals recorded May 26; lead vocal re-cut July 7, 1966

Motown M 1127, June 27, 1968

#31 R&B, #49 Pop

With H-D-H gone, and their inventory of Tops tracks tapped out, Ivy Jo Hunter sought to recreate the magic he'd wrought with "Ask The Lonely" and "Loving You Is Sweeter Than Ever," writing "Yesterday's Dreams" with Jack Goga, a frequent collaborator, Vernon Bullock and Pamela Sawyer, a British-American writer new to Histville.

Sawyer was riding the success of "I Ain't Gonna Eat Out My Heart Anymore," the debut single for the Young Rascals, when she and her writing partner Lori Burton sent a tape to H-D-H for review in early 1966. When none of their songs got released and their sponsors left Motown, Burton left as well. But Sawyer hung in.

"I found my feet again quite soon, as I was working with Ivy Hunter who was marvelous and helped me a great deal," she told Steve Armitage. "You see, Lori and I had always worked from the melody and I had written the lyrics around the melody. Ivy worked from a basic drum-bass rhythm almost devoid of recognizable melody. This completely threw me and I almost gave up. Ivy told me not to worry about it at all. He said that he could arrange whatever I wrote. I soon found that this gave me enough confidence to write easily in this new way."

"Yesterday's Dreams" was singled out by U.K. critic David Morse as representative of Motown's transition from H-D-H to a new sound. "Holland, Dozier and Holland typically alternated unison passages with sections in which the lead was carried over a background of harmonizing or antiphonal chanting," he wrote in his seminal book *Motown and the Arrival of Black Music*. "With 'Yesterday's Dreams,' however, the use of these devices is altogether more complex...With its effortless succession of diminuendos and crescendos, this seems to be the quintessential pop record of the '60s, transcending the old dichotomy between beat numbers and ballads." Not a big hit in the U.S., it did a little better in the U.K., peaking at No. 23, and the song became the title track of the Tops' next LP, released in September.

"For Once In My Life," the first version of the song released by Motown, was taken from their 1967 album *Four Tops On Broadway*.

7. I'm In A Different World

(Brian Holland-Lamont Dozier-Edward Holland, Jr.)

Produced by Brian Holland, Lamont Dozier and R. Dean Taylor

Track recorded November 7, 1967; horns and strings recorded at Golden World, November 17; background vocals recorded December 13; demo vocal recorded January 15, 1968; lead vocal recorded April 15 & 16, 1968

8. Remember When

(Shena DeMell-Ivy Jo Hunter-Jack Alan Goga)

Produced by Ivy Jo Hunter

Track recorded June 10, 1967; demo lead recorded June 26; additional overdubs recorded June 27 & 28, 1967

Motown M 1132, September 19, 1968

#23 R&B, #51 Pop

After the relative failure of "Yesterday's Dreams," Motown reached back into the vault for a Holland-Dozier-Holland production; studio logs suggest "I'm In A Different World" was the final H-D-H session for the company. Its title unwittingly describes an uncomfortable period, and the record's release coincided with Motown's lawsuit against them and the team's subsequent countersuit. The record was another stiff, though it did reach the U.K. top 30.

Lamont Dozier consistently calls "I'm In A Different World" his favorite. "I thought it was the greatest song ever written," he told *Mojo* magazine. "But I guess it wasn't meant to be."

H-D-H's departure adversely affected the Tops more than any other group. They were, Duke Fakir said, "musically brokenhearted."

"H-D-H had a magic touch with us and they were the finest friends we'd ever met," he added. "They worked with us on a person-to-person basis. The reason they were able to write so many good songs for us was that they wrote about us and the things we did."

9. What Is A Man

(John Bristol-Doris McNeil)

Produced by Johnny Bristol

Track recorded December 10, 1968; horns recorded December 20; strings overdubbed at Golden World, December 21, 1968; demo vocal recorded January 16, 1969; additional instrumentation completed January 17; lead vocal recorded January 20, 1969

10. Don't Bring Back Memories

(Raynoma Singleton)

Produced by Gwen Gordy Fuqua and Harvey Fuqua

Track recorded July 27, 1968; additional instrumentation recorded August 3; lead vocal recorded August 30; strings overdubbed at Golden World, September 3, 1968

Motown M 1147, April 10, 1969

#53 Pop

"What Is A Man" is an awkward placeholder, sounding wholly unlike their classic material; the production emphasized the quartet's vocal harmonies at the expense of Levi Stubbs' piercing lead. It didn't fly with the public in the U.S., although loyal fans in the U.K. embraced it, pushing it to No. 16 there. An alternate version, with more lead vocals by Levi, was included on Tops compilation *Until You Love Someone* released by Rhino Records in 1993.

Eddie Singleton, who was then married to Berry Gordy's ex-wife, Raynoma, wrote "Don't Bring Back Memories." Singleton told Andy Rix in *Shades Of Soul* magazine that he originally wrote and recorded the song for his protégé Tommy Knight in 1963/4, when working with and romancing "Miss Ray," as she was known at Motown. He'd handed over the songwriting credit to Raynoma, he says, in case Mr. Gordy took an aversion to putting out a record with Eddie's name on it. Listen for Harvey Fuqua's arranging trademark: the harp in the instrumental break.

Both sides of this single were taken from the album *Four Tops Now!*

11. Don't Let Him Take Your Love From Me

(Norman Whitfield-Barrett Strong)

Produced by Norman Whitfield

Orchestra Directed by Jerry Long

Track recorded January 30, 1969,
assigned to Marvin Gaye;
Four Tops overdubs recorded February 5;
horns added September 30, 1969

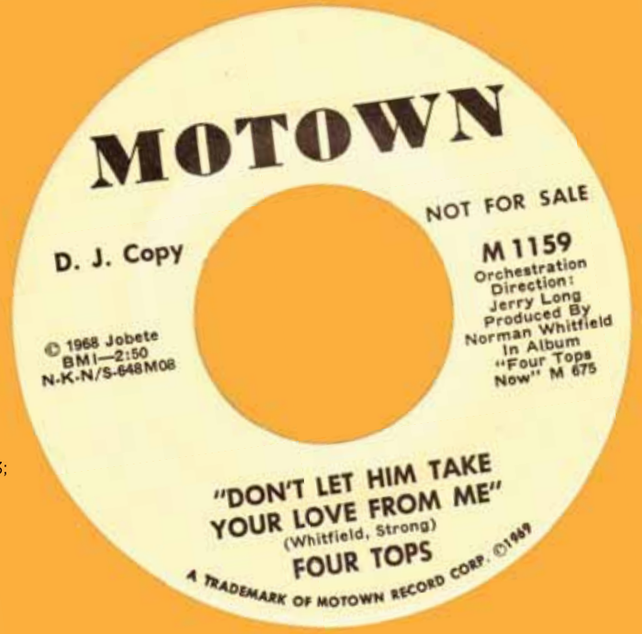
12. The Key

(Raynard Miner)

Produced by Raynard Miner

Arranged by Willie Shorter

Track recorded June 25, 1968;
lead vocal recorded July 12;
background vocals recorded August 8 and 13;
horns added August 16; strings recorded
at Golden World, September 6;
background vocals recut October 8
and 30, 1968



Motown M 1159, November 6, 1969

#25 R&B, #45 Pop

"Don't Let Him Take Your Love From Me" is an exciting first-time collaboration between the Tops and the Whitfield-Strong team, a cover of a song Whit had previously recorded with Gladys Knight & the Pips as well as Jimmy Ruffin. Though taken from the LP *Four Tops Now!*, the Tops' 45 rpm release is a different version with overdubbed horns. Levi roars through the track as he did with H-D-H, but it was hardly a hit.

Raynard Miner wrote and produced "The Key," which marked his Motown debut. Miner was a Chess Records alumnus, a blind singer and songwriter who had come to Motown following the sale of Chess to GRT. At Chess he was best known for co-writing and/or producing a string of hits, including "Rescue Me" for Fontella Bass, Little Milton's "We're Gonna Make It" and Jackie Wilson's "(Your Love Is Lifting Me) Higher And Higher." He wrote several other tracks for the Four Tops that went unreleased but were resurrected from the vault for the group's 2005 release, *Lost Without You: Motown Lost & Found*.

"The Key" was also taken from *Four Tops Now!*, although by now the group had a new album, *Soul Spin*. The latter LP, which included all new recordings with an emphasis on MOR covers, was targeted at the emerging album market. No singles were issued from it.

13. It's All In The Game

(Charles Dawes-Carl Sigman)

Produced by Frank Wilson / Arranged by Jerry Long and Jimmy Roach

Track recorded October 14, 1969; instrumental overdub recorded October 15; demo vocal recorded October 28; strings added November 12; lead vocal recorded November 19 and 29; background vocals recorded December 15, 1969

14. Love (Is The Answer)

(William Robinson-Kathy Wakefield-Frank Wilson)

Produced by Frank Wilson and Lawrence Payton / Arranged by Jerry Long and Dave Van DePitte

Working Title: Jackass

Track recorded October 24, 1969; lead vocal recorded November 28; horns added December 31; background vocals and additional overdubs recorded January 8, 1970; miscellaneous overdubs recorded January 9; strings added January 24, 1970

Motown M 1164, March 21, 1970

#6 R&B, #24 Pop, #39 Adult Contemporary

Frank Wilson, one-third of Motown's West Coast production team in the mid-1960s, was now at the Detroit home office renovating the Supremes and the Four Tops. For the latter group, his inventive production of "It's All In The Game" was the shot in the arm they needed after the departure of Holland-Dozier-Holland. It was the first major Tops hit that didn't feature Levi Stubbs' leonine roar all the way through, though when he does take over halfway through, the song's energy level takes a leap.

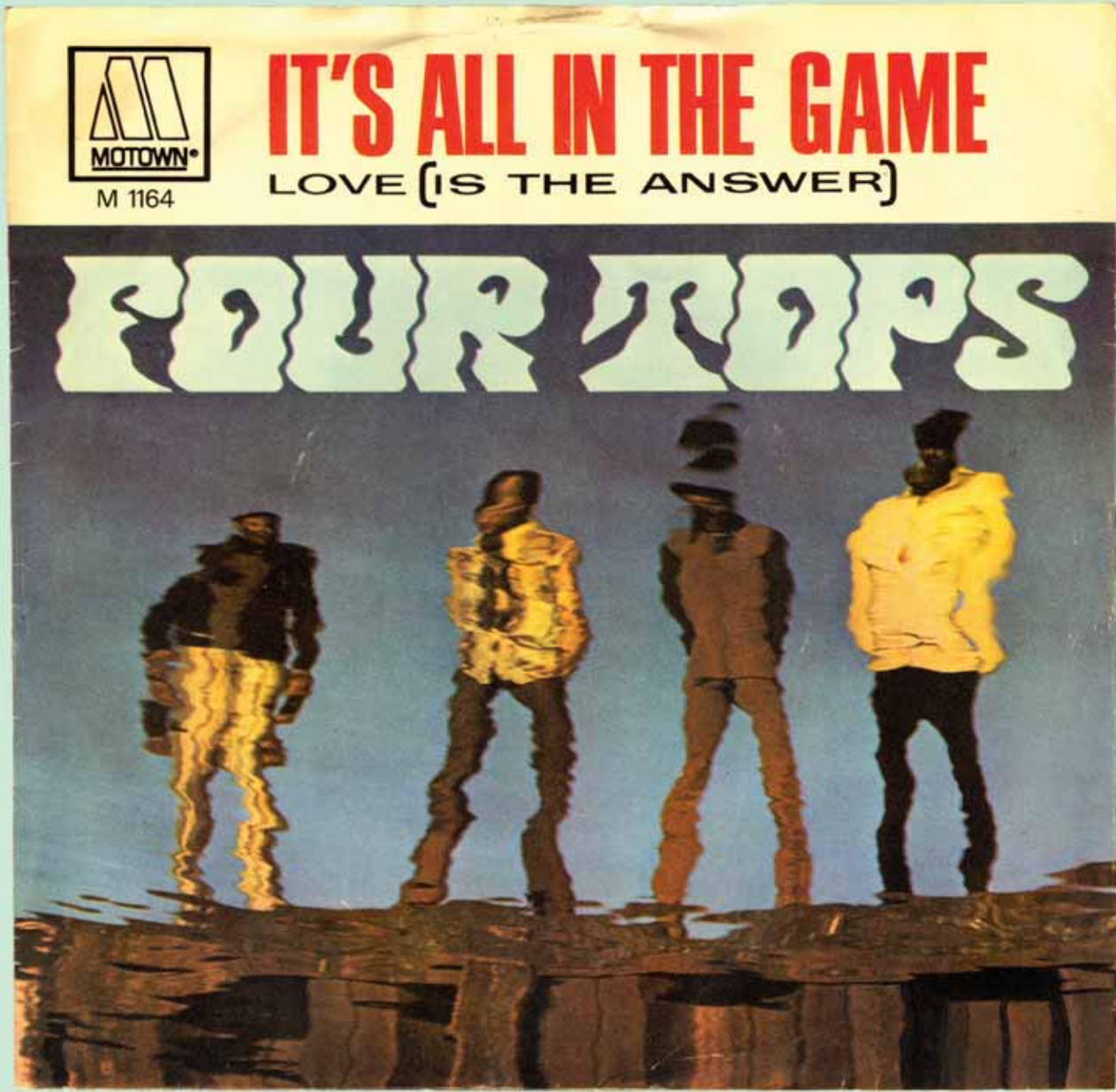
"It was one of my favorite songs growing up as a kid," Wilson said. "Our desire was to capture that melody, and maybe add just a little bit more flavor to it."

"It's All In The Game" first gained fame in 1958 when a version by Tommy Edwards hit No. 1. It is the only hit record co-written by a U.S. Vice-President, a certain Charles Dawes, who served under Calvin Coolidge. Dawes composed the music as "Melody In A Major" in 1912; Carl Sigman, who had a long career of successes that included the hit "Ebb Tide," wrote the lyrics.

On a promotional tour of the U.K. around the time of the single's release, Fakir revealed that "touring has taken [its] toll and we just had to get off the road. The break also mellowed us professionally and that's made us change our style a little more into the ballad thing." The mellow times were interrupted when police burst into a press conference and arrested Levi Stubbs for drug possession, for which he was acquitted, and on an ammunitions charge, for which he was docked a small fine. The ensuing publicity didn't hurt and the record hit the U.K. top five.

Back home, "Game" was the Tops' biggest R&B hit since 1967's "Bernadette" and their highest pop entry since "If I Were A Carpenter," also a cover. It also received a Grammy® nomination, for Best R&B Performance By A Duo Or Group, Vocal or Instrumental. It lost to "Didn't I (Blow Your Mind This Time)" by the Delfonics.

Both sides of the single appeared on the album *Still Waters Run Deep* — arguably Motown' first concept album, released more than a year before Marvin Gaye's *What's Going On*.



15. Still Water (Love)

(William Robinson-Frank Wilson)

Produced by Frank Wilson and Lawrence Payton

Arranged by Jerry Long and Jimmy Roach

Working Title: Theme (Still Water Part 2)

Track recorded October 24, 1969; horns added November 12; lead vocal recorded December 16; background vocals recorded December 17; additional backgrounds recorded December 19, 1969; lead vocal recut January 2, 1970; miscellaneous overdubs recorded January 9, 1970

16. Still Water (Peace)

(William Robinson-Frank Wilson)

Produced by Frank Wilson and Lawrence Payton / Arranged by Jerry Long and Jimmy Roach

Working Title: Theme (Still Water Part 1)

Track recorded October 24, 1969; horns overdubbed November 12; strings added December 8; demo and background vocals recorded December 17; lead vocal and additional background vocals recorded December 19, 1969

Motown M 1170, August 6, 1970

#4 R&B, #11 Pop

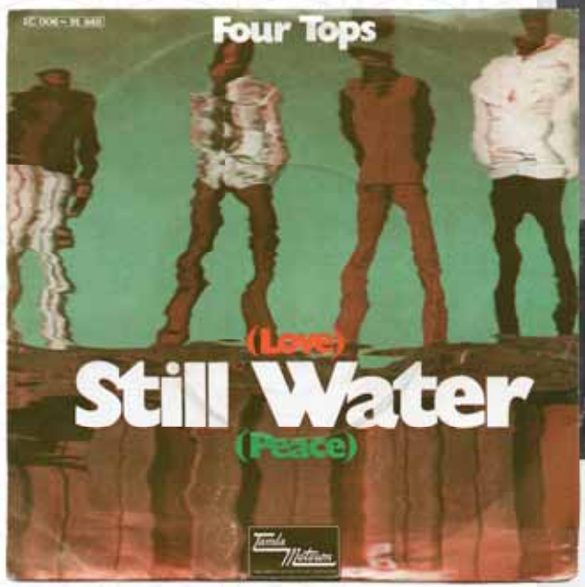
"Still Water" gave the Four Tops their highest chart position in nearly three years. It proved that in Frank Wilson the group had finally found a producer who could restore some of their former glory.

"Frank was an experimental cat," said the late Top Lawrence Payton, who co-produced both sides without label credit. "When we worked with him, anything was fair. He'd say, 'Lawrence, just do what you want to do.' Holland-Dozier-Holland were more structured; it was like bam-bam-bam-bam. Frank Wilson, he was just free, he just let it flow."

"The concept was that the [*Still Waters*] album would feel like one piece of music," Wilson said. "The Funk Brothers thought I was mad. They hated to see me coming."

Both sides of the single were originally recorded as one six-minute track: B-side "Peace" actually segues directly into "Love," although they were split for the LP sequence as well. (The original unedited track is available on *Fourever*.) Session singers included Brenda Joyce Evans and Billie Rae Calvin, soon to be part of the Undisputed Truth.

Its success inspired several cover versions at Motown the following year. Impact of Brass included "Still Water (Love)" on their Rare Earth album, *Down At The Brassworks*. Junior Walker cut it for *Moody Jr.*; a Supremes version, recorded in 1971 with producer Bobby Taylor, was finally issued on the 3-CD collection *This Is The Story: The '70s Albums Vol. 1*, in 2006. Outside Motown, Chicago soul-jazz great Terry Callier recorded a cover in 1979, while R&B crooner O'Bryan had a minor chart hit with his slow-jam version in 1982.



17. River Deep - Mountain High

The Supremes & Four Tops

(Phil Spector-Jeff Barry-Ellie Greenwich)

Produced by Nickolas Ashford and Valerie Simpson

Arranged by Paul Riser

Track recorded April 22, 1970; groups recorded May 7; horns recorded at Golden World, May 7; strings recorded at GW, May 8; additional background vocals recorded at GW, May 11; lead vocals recorded at GW, May 12, 1970

18. Together We Can Make Such Sweet Music

The Supremes & Four Tops

(Richard Drapkin-Marty Coleman)

Produced by Duke Browner / Arranged by Wade Marcus

Track recorded April 28, 1970; Levi's lead vocal recorded at Golden World, May 5; Jean's lead vocal recorded at GW, May 12; group recorded May 14; strings recorded at GW, May 18, 1970

Motown M 1173, November 5, 1970

#7 R&B, #14 Pop

Teaming Diana Ross & the Supremes and the Temptations in 1968-69 produced a lot of activity: two television specials, three hit albums and, in their sublime cover of "I'm Gonna Make You Love Me," a timeless hit. There was less fanfare when the Supremes, with Jean Terrell replacing Ms. Ross, joined forces with the Four Tops. To the groups, however, the pairing was, as Mary Wilson wrote, "a natural."

Motown issued another cover for their first single together: "River Deep - Mountain High," originally conceived by songwriters Phil Spector, Jeff Barry and Ellie Greenwich as a vehicle for Spector's new signing, Ike & Tina Turner, in 1966. While that version has gone down in pop music history as an expensive flop, Ashford & Simpson's production of it for the Supremes and Tops became a decent-sized hit.

Both sides of the single were taken from the album *The Magnificent 7*, released a couple of months earlier. "Together We Can Make Such Sweet Music" was the third appearance of the song in 1970. It first appeared as a B-side by the Spinners while the Supremes also issued a version on *New Ways, But Love Stays*. The song's co-writer, Ricky Drapkin, also known as the singer Ricky Dee, wrote "Devil In Her Heart," recorded by the Beatles on their second album, which also featured three Motown covers.

19. Just Seven Numbers (Can Straighten Out My Life)

(Pamela Sawyer-Gloria Jones)

Produced by Frank Wilson

Arranged by Dave Van DePitte

Working Title: Everyone Wants Someone To Be Their Own Piece Of Clay

Track recorded July 17, 1970; additional overdubs recorded at Golden World, July 20; lead vocal recorded at GW, July 21; horns recorded at GW, July 29 and 30; background vocals recorded at GW, August 1, 1970

20. I Wish I Were Your Mirror

(Pamela Sawyer-Frank Wilson)

Produced by Frank Wilson and Lawrence Payton

Arranged by Jerry Long

Track recorded at Golden World, August 21, 1969; demo vocal recorded August 22; instrumental overdub recorded at GW, August 28; horns recorded at GW, September 5; second demo vocal recorded October 28; lead vocal recorded December 6; strings added December 8; Andantes recorded December 14, 1969; Tops' background vocals overdubbed January 2, 1970

Motown M 1175, December 28, 1970

#9 R&B, #40 Pop

"Just Seven Numbers," from the album *Changing Times*, took the group away from the ballad genre that had characterized their last two, highly successful, singles, and it barely scraped the Top 40. Despite the group's usual winning performance, the song doesn't quite go anywhere. A duet version with David Ruffin and Bobby Taylor, discovered in the vault and issued on *Motown Sings Motown Treasures* in 2005, includes some additional lyrics that may have helped. The song does provide an opportunity to explain to a younger listener why Levi needed just seven numbers, not the ten-number dialing system that became mandatory in the mid-1990s, to straighten out his life.

Note that Pamela Sawyer and Gloria Jones developed the track with a title they would later recycle as "Piece Of Clay," a gospel-tinged song later recorded by Marvin Gaye and the Commodores. Gaye's version went unreleased for more than 20 years until his 1995 box set *The Master*; it was subsequently featured in the film *Phenomenon* and its hit soundtrack. The Commodores' version, still unreleased, was, according to Jones, Lionel Richie's first recording as lead singer.

"I Wish I Were Your Mirror," a Sawyer contribution from *Still Waters Run Deep*, was covered by the Supremes on their 1970 LP *New Ways, But Love Stays*.

21. You Gotta Have Love In Your Heart *The Supremes & Four Tops*

(Nick Zesses-Dino Fekaris)

Produced by Clay McMurray / Arranged by Tom Baird

Track recorded January 11, 1971, subsequent sessions all at Studio B: additional overdubs including background vocals recorded January 14; strings overdubbed January 25; horns recorded February 10, 1971

22. I'm Glad About It *The Supremes & Four Tops*

(Nickolas Ashford-Valerie Simpson)

Produced by Nickolas Ashford and Valerie Simpson / Arranged by Paul Riser

Track recorded January 12, 1971, subsequent sessions all at Studio B: additional overdubs including background vocals recorded January 13; strings overdubbed January 29; horns recorded January 30, 1971

23. You Gotta Have Love In Your Heart *The Supremes & Four Tops* [stereo promo version]

(Nick Zesses-Dino Fekaris)

Produced by Clay McMurray / Arranged by Tom Baird

Recording details as above

Motown M 1181, May 11, 1971

#41 R&B, #55 Pop

"You Gotta Have Love In Your Heart," the group duet follow-up to "River Deep - Mountain High," is a fine, rocking number with a gospel feel. *Billboard* magazine predicted it would hit the pop top 20, and the groups performed together on the U.K.'s *Top of The Pops*, marking their only televised promotion of the duet albums. But the single was a commercial disappointment on both sides of the Atlantic.

"I'm Glad About It," an Ashford-Simpson song and production, is virtually a Levi-Jean only duet. Both sides of the 45 subsequently appeared on the Supremes/Tops' second album, *The Return Of The Magnificent Seven*, released in June. No singles were issued from *Dynamite*, a third Supremes/Tops album, issued in December of that year.

24. In These Changing Times

(Frank Wilson-Pamela Sawyer)

Produced by Frank Wilson and Lawrence Payton

Arranged by Dave Van DePitte

Album version: Track recorded July 2, 1970, subsequent sessions at Studio B: additional overdubs recorded July 17; lead vocal recut July 18; background vocals recorded July 20; lead recut again July 24, 1970

This version: Track recorded July 17, 1970; background vocals recorded at Studio B, July 27; strings and horns overdubbed at Studio B, July 29; new or additional horn parts added or recut at Studio B, August 1; additional instrumentation recorded October 29; lead vocals and additional background vocals recorded March 12, 1971

25. Right Before My Eyes

(Frank Wilson-Pamela Sawyer)

Produced by Frank Wilson and Lawrence Payton

Arranged by Dave Van DePitte and Jimmy Roach

Working Title: Just Can't Break The Habit (Lullaby Lost)

Track recorded July 2, 1970; subsequent sessions at Studio B: background vocals and additional overdubs recorded July 21; lead vocal recorded July 22 & 26; additional background vocals recorded July 27; strings and horns added July 29; new or additional horn parts recorded July 30; final overdubs recorded August 1, 1970

Motown M 1185, May 27, 1971

#28 R&B, #70 Pop

The Four Tops were back with Frank Wilson for "In These Changing Times." Their last three singles with Wilson had gone Top 10 R&B and Top 40 pop, but this one was nowhere close. A little more than a year later, the group would be gone from the company.

The track shared the same title as one from the *Changing Times* LP, released the previous August, but the single was a different version. The B-side "Right Before My Eyes" packs a punch, with a great sliding bass line doubled by fuzz guitar and Wurlitzer piano. Lawrence Payton co-produced both tracks but he was not listed on the label copy.

26. MacArthur Park (Part 2)

(Jim Webb)

Produced by Frank Wilson

Arranged by Wade Marcus

Track recorded in Los Angeles, date unknown; overdubs completed at Studio B, November 6, 1968; lead vocal recorded November 21, 1968

27. MacArthur Park (Part 1)

(Jim Webb)

Produced by Frank Wilson

Arranged by Wade Marcus

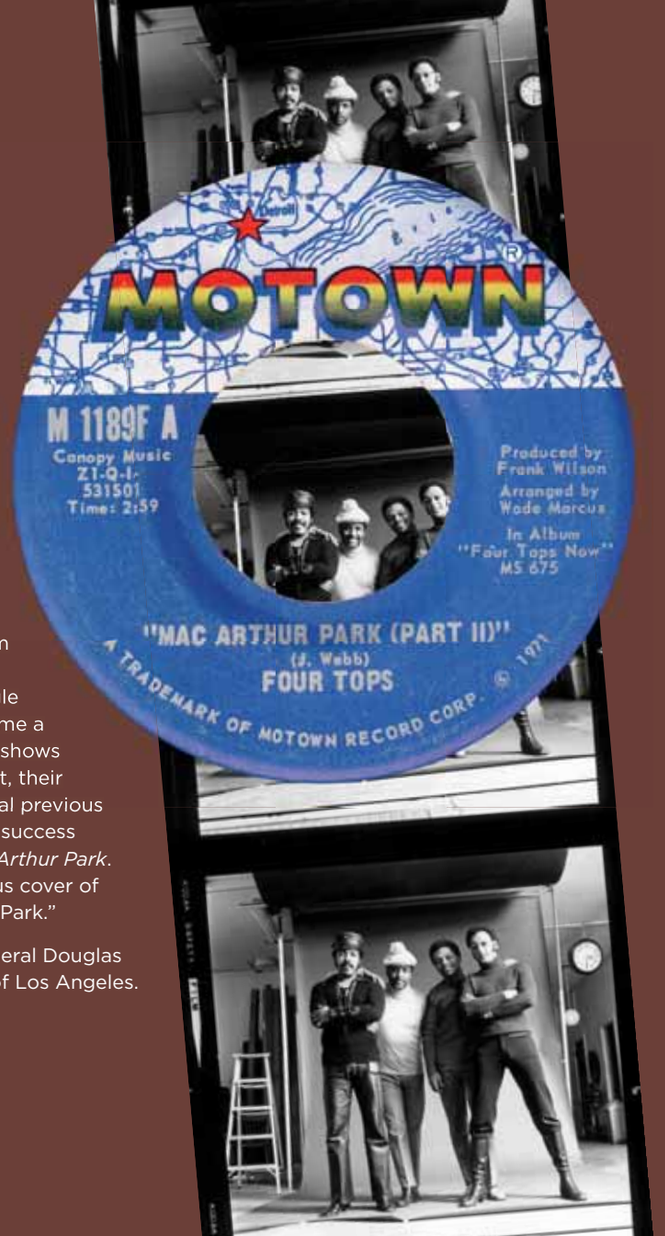
Recording details as above

Motown M 1189F, August 10, 1971

#27 R&B, #38 Pop

This cover of Jimmy Webb's "MacArthur Park" was recorded shortly after Irish actor Richard Harris had taken his version to No. 2 on the Pop charts in 1968. Placed on the album *Four Tops Now!* in June of 1969, the extended track was finally plucked from the LP as a single more than two years later. The song had become a successful showcase in the live show; at Tops' shows as late as the mid-'90s they would open with it, their harmonies rich as ever. "Part 2" was, like several previous Motown singles, the plug side, and its modest success led Motown to reissue *Four Tops Now!* as *MacArthur Park*. It certainly fared better than Motown's previous cover of the song, the Soupy Sales parody "Muck-Arty Park."

There is a real MacArthur Park, named for General Douglas A. MacArthur, in the Westlake neighborhood of Los Angeles.



DISC 3

1. **A Simple Game** [U.S. version]
   (Mike Pinder)
   Produced by Tony Clarke / Arranged by Arthur Greenslade / Recorded in London, May 5, 1970

2. **L.A. (My Town)**
   (Sherlie Matthews)
   Produced by Frank Wilson and Lawrence Payton / Arranged by Jerry Long
   Track recorded August 5, 1969; additional recording August 9, 12 and 14;
   horns overdubbed at Studio B, August 26 and September 8; final overdubs recorded September 15, 1969

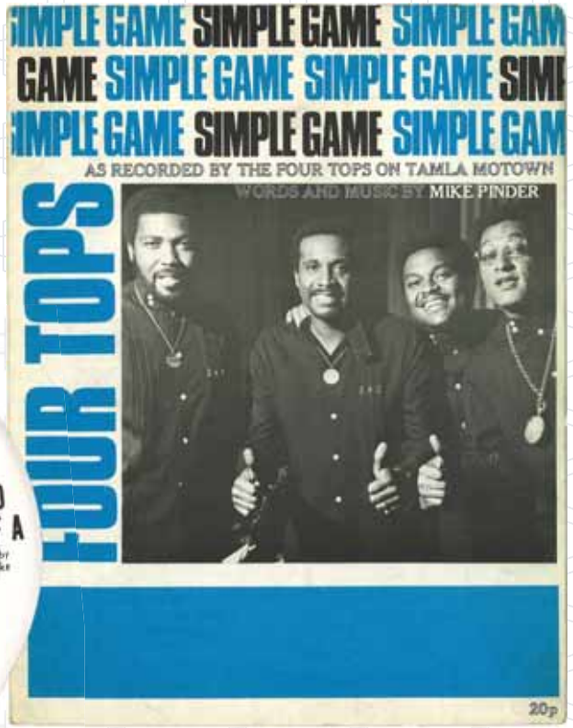
Motown M 1196F, January 4, 1972
#34 R&B, #90 Pop

"A Simple Game" was a unique collaboration between the Four Tops and the Moody Blues. Lawrence Payton recalled to Michael Heatley how Tony Clarke, the Moody's producer, approached them with a demo following a one-nighter on a British tour. "We didn't even know who he was," Payton said. "We thought it was a good song, so the next day we went in, rehearsed and recorded it." The Moody Blues, fresh from global success with a reissue of "Nights In White Satin," were the uncredited backing band. They had previously recorded the song, written by their keyboardist Mike Pinder, in 1968, when it was issued as the B-side of their single "Ride My See-Saw." The arranger on this version, Arthur Greenslade, was, by 1969, a veteran of the U.K. scene, having worked with many leading acts including Tom Jones and Dusty Springfield.

Before being released in the States "Simple Game" was already a No. 3 hit in the U.K. (See track 10 on this disc.) There was a promotional music video produced for television and the song was subsequently included in the U.K. LP release *Motown Chartbusters Vol. 6* that fall. For the U.S., Motown added "A" to the title and remixed the track, but its lack of stateside success demonstrated the widening gulf between British and American Motown tastes. "A Simple Game" did not appear on a Four Tops album in the U.S.; the U.K. version was included on their hits collection Four *Tops Story 1964-1972*.

As unusual as this cut was for Four Tops' fans in the U.S., it was just as strange as hearing four proud sons of the Motor City crooning "L.A. (My Town)," plucked from the 1970 album *Still Waters Run Deep*. Jerry Long's arrangement nods firmly in the direction of Jimmy Webb's California-upbeat soul with the 5th Dimension. Songwriter Sherlie Matthews was a Los Angeles resident and co-founder of the Blackberries, one of Los Angeles' busiest female background vocal groups and new recruits to MoWest.

"It was just my experience of living here, and talking about all the different things in L.A.," Sherlie said. "I didn't write it for [the Tops], but when I played it for them, they liked it and recorded it."


SIMPLE GAME SIMPLE GAME SIMPLE GAM
GAME SIMPLE GAME SIMPLE GAME SIMP
SIMPLE GAME SIMPLE GAME SIMPLE GAM
AS RECORDED BY THE FOUR TOPS ON TAMLA MOTOWN
WORDS AND MUSIC BY MIKE PINDER
FOUR TOPS
20p

3. I Can't Quit Your Love

(Leonard Caston-Kathy Wakefield)

Produced by Frank Wilson / Arranged by Jerry Long

Working Title: Thirteen Mile Road

Track recorded May 27, 1971; instrumental overdubs recorded June 3; background vocals recorded at Studio B, June 24; lead vocal recorded at Studio B, June 25; new or additional background vocals recorded July 14; additional instrumental overdubs recorded July 27; further instrumental overdubs, plus horn and string overdubs recorded in Los Angeles, date unknown; final instrumental overdubs recorded at Studio A, January 14, 1972

4. Happy (Is A Bumpy Road)

(Pamela Sawyer-Frank Wilson)

Produced by Frank Wilson / Arranged by Jerry Long

Track recorded at Studio B, February 22, 1971; strings and horns added at Studio A, March 15; background vocals recorded at Studio B, June 28; lead vocal recorded at Studio B, June 30, 1971

Motown M 1198F, April 20, 1972

#102 Pop

Levi Stubbs works hard to make this energetic Frank Wilson production sound like a Four Tops song. His anguished cries careen around a dense arrangement that's full of electronic effects and a synthesizer. But the Tops don't have all that much to do in the background, apart from occasional "doo-doo-wop" breaks. "I Can't Quit Your Love" had little chart action — nowhere on the R&B chart, and only "Bubbling Under" the Hot 100, their worst showing since joining Motown. It was included on the *Nature Planned It* album, issued the same month and, despite its limited commercial acceptance, covered by Bobby Taylor on his first post-Motown 45. The Jackson 5 recorded the song in 1974, when it was issued as the B-side of "Whatever You Got I Want."

"Happy (Is A Bumpy Road)," previously recorded by the Supremes and issued as the B-side to their single "Nathan Jones," was also included on the Tops' LP.

The jacket for *Nature Planned It* contained the credit "Bass (Personified) ... James Jamerson." The Motown bassist — "Igor," as insiders knew him — was still on the scene, but alcoholism had taken over. "I'd seen him when he was 'feeling good' [drunk], but when the music started, it was all over — he played!" said guitarist Melvin "Wah Wah Watson" Ragin. "But sometimes when things went wrong, or a producer or someone pissed him off, he wouldn't play. I mean, he would play ... but it wouldn't be the same James."

5. (It's The Way) Nature Planned It

(Frank Wilson-Pamela Sawyer)

Produced by Frank Wilson

Arranged by Jerry Long

Track recorded May 27, 1971; demo lead vocal recorded at Studio B, June 24;
group background vocals recorded at Studio B, June 25; lead vocal recorded at Studio B, June 29;
additional background vocals recorded July 14; strings and horns overdubbed in Los Angeles on unknown dates;
instrumental overdubs recorded December 21, 1971

6. I'll Never Change

(Kathy Wakefield-Leonard Caston)

Produced by Frank Wilson

Arranged by Jerry Long

Track recorded June 4, 1971; background vocals recorded at Studio B, June 29 & 30;
additional background vocals recorded at Studio B, July 30;
strings & horns overdubbed in Los Angeles on unknown dates

Motown M 1210F, August 1, 1972

#8 R&B, #53 Pop

"(It's The Way) Nature Planned It" was the title track from the Tops' *Nature Planned It* album, released in April 1972. A love ballad with a strong hook, it made the Top 10 R&B, but didn't reach the Top 50 Pop. "I'll Never Change," from the same LP, was an up-tempo number much more in the Tops' classic '60s style.

Motown had by this time relocated its headquarters to Los Angeles. The Four Tops declined Berry Gordy's offer to follow him West. "It had been our whole thing, being with the entertainers in town, being at the studio," Duke Fakir said. "Man, it's hard when all your friends leave town. It was dismal. It took me a while to adjust."

Duke soon found the best adjustment was to leave the company. "We worked very hard trying to work out a contract with Motown, but it wasn't to be," he told writer Jack Ryan. "It broke our hearts to leave Motown, but we felt we weren't getting the attention we needed."

But the group recognized their time at Motown had been fruitful. Obie Benson spoke with John Abbey of *Blues & Soul* as this single peaked on the charts: "We have parted company happily, there is no bad feeling," Benson said. "The company probably understands what we are striving to do. Yes, we're delighted to leave on such a good note because we've had twelve wonderful years at Motown and this is the ideal way to bow out."

"(It's The Way) Nature Planned It" proved to be the Tops' last 45 for Motown from this era. In late 1972 they signed a deal with Dunhill, scoring at once with "Keeper Of The Castle." They switched to ABC, Dunhill's parent company, in 1975, then to Casablanca in 1981, returning to Motown in 1983. When Motown rejected *Hot Nights*, an expected album release, they joined Arista in 1988, scoring their biggest hit of the decade with "Indestructible," one of the scorned LP tracks they had taken with them. Later in the year the Four Tops hit with "Loco In Acapulco," featured in the film *Buster* — and co-written by their longtime Motown collaborator Lamont Dozier.

Bonus Tracks: The U.K.-only Singles

7. Mame

(Jerry Herman)

Produced by Frank Wilson

Track recorded in Los Angeles, date unknown; strings and lead vocals added May 26, 1966

Tamla Motown TMG 634, B-side of "Walk Away Renee," December 1967

Another Motown attempt at adult crossover, from the 1967 album *Four Tops On Broadway*, this was a cover of the title track from the Broadway musical of the same name, which had debuted in New York in May 1966.

8. Do What You Gotta Do

(Jimmy Webb)

Produced by Frank Wilson, Lawrence Payton and Wade Marcus

Track recorded in Los Angeles, date unknown; additional recording at Studio B, December 4, 1968; lead vocal recorded at Studio B, January 6, 1969; lead re-recorded January 18, 1969

9. Can't Seem To Get You Out Of My Mind

(Nickolas Ashford-Valerie Simpson)

Produced by Nickolas Ashford and Valerie Simpson

Track recorded January 17, 1968; lead vocal added January 18; horns added January 20; all background vocals recorded January 30; additional background vocals re-recorded February 14; instrumental overdubs added April 27, 1968

Tamla Motown TMG 710, September 1969

#11 U.K.

A post-Motown Jimmy Webb composition, "Do What You Gotta Do" was taken from the album *Four Tops Now!*, issued earlier in 1969. With the group's depressing showing on the U.S. charts, it became the Tops' biggest hit of that year anywhere.

"Can't Seem To Get You Out Of My Mind," a rare Ashford-Simpson Tops collaboration first issued on the group album *Yesterday's Dreams* a year earlier, had become a Northern Soul favorite, and was soon covered by the Eddy Jacobs Exchange.

10. **Simple Game** [U.K. version]

(Mike Pinder)

Produced by Tony Clarke / Arranged by Arthur Greenslade

11. **You Stole My Love**

(Tony Clarke-Marie Guirron)

Produced by Tony Clarke / Arranged by Arthur Greenslade / Recorded May 5, 1970, in London, England

Tamla Motown TMG 785, September 1971

#3 U.K.

A non-starter in the U.S., "Simple Game" featured a different B-side on its U.K. single configuration. "You Stole My Love" appears to have been co-written by Justin Hayward, who mentioned in a radio interview that he used the pseudonym of Guirron, his wife Marie's maiden name, to keep the publishing rights with Motown. The track did not appear in any Four Tops album until the release of their box set *Fourever* in 2001.

12. **It's Got To Be A Miracle (This Thing Called Love)** ***The Supremes and Four Tops***

(William Stevenson-Vernon Bullock-Sylvia Moy)

Produced by Clay McMurray

Working title: Doesn't Take A Miracle

Track recorded April 29, 1970; background vocals recorded May 6; lead vocals added at Studio B, May 11; strings recorded at Studio B, May 16, 1970

Tamla Motown TMG 777, B-side of "River Deep - Mountain High," June 1971

When Motown U.K. issued "River Deep - Mountain High" as a single, seven months after the U.S. release, it had a different B-side. Taken from the duet album *The Magnificent Seven*, "It's Got To Be A Miracle" was a cover of a track best known in its original duet incarnation, by Marvin Gaye and Kim Weston. First issued on their album *Take Two*, the track was further spotlighted as the flip side of their hit "It Takes Two." Barbara Randolph first cut "MIracle" at Motown; her version remained in the can until her 2003 U.K.-issued *Collection*.

13. **Without The One You Love (Life's Not Worth While)** ***The Supremes and Four Tops***

(Brian Holland-Lamont Dozier-Edward Holland Jr.)

Produced by Clay McMurray

Track recorded February 27, 1970, assigned to David Ruffin; reassigned to the Supremes and Four Tops and voices added May 12; additional overdubs recorded May 14; strings added at Studio B, May 18, 1970

14. **Let's Make Love Now** ***The Supremes and Four Tops***

(Dino Fekaris-Nick Zesses)

Produced by Henry Cosby

Working title: Don't Turn Me Down

All sessions recorded in Studio B: Track recorded January 10, 1971; demo vocals recorded January 12; additional overdubs recorded January 13; background vocals added January 16; strings recorded January 25; horns January 26, 1971

Tamla Motown TMG 815, May 1972

Motown U.K. worked hard to break a single by the Supremes-Four Tops team. This release, a cover of the Tops' second single from *The Magnificent Seven* — by now nearly two years old — superseded the U.S. release of "I Can't Quit Your Love," which the U.K. office sat on for another year. The "Nick & Dino" team who wrote "Let's Make Love Now," from *The Return Of The Magnificent Seven*, were Motown staffers who would write songs for Martha Reeves & the Vandellas, Rare Earth, the Temptations, Diana Ross and others, as well as front the band Matrix. Fekaris would also go on to partner with Freddie Perren, notably as the co-writer of "I Will Survive."

15. **Walk With Me, Talk With Me Darling**

(John Glover-Clay McMurray-James Dean)

Produced by Clay McMurray

Track recorded April 30, 1971, assigned to the Originals; reassigned to the Four Tops and overdubs recorded June 18; horns and strings recorded at Studio B, July 6, 1971; miscellaneous overdubs at Studio B, January 8, 1972

Tamla Motown TMG 823, July 1972

#32 U.K.

While "(It's The Way) Nature Planned It" was being prepped as a U.S. single release, Motown U.K. chose this track from the *Nature Planned It* LP. It wasn't a huge hit but did manage a few weeks on the U.K. pop chart. Its B-side was "L.A. (My Town)," already a U.S. B-side, to "A Simple Game," earlier in the year.

16. Love Feels Like Fire

(Brian Holland-Lamont Dozier-Edward Holland Jr.)

Produced by Brian Holland, Lamont Dozier

Working title: Is It Worth The Sacrifice

Track recorded January 29, 1964, assigned to Eddie Holland;
reassigned to the Four Tops and their vocals dubbed in on an unknown date;
background vocals recorded June 8 and July 28, 1965

Tamla Motown TMG 829, B-side of "I'll Turn To Stone," September 1972

Motown U.K. had reissued "Bernadette," with moderate success, earlier in the year. Here they were reissuing "I'll Turn To Stone," which like its U.S. counterpart had been the flip of "7-Rooms Of Gloom" back in 1967, although it hadn't become a double-sided hit in the U.K. "Love Feels Like Fire," a Northern Soul favorite originally issued on *Four Tops' Second Album* in '65, was chosen as the B-side.

17. Reach Out And Touch (Somebody's Hand) *The Supremes and Four Tops*

(Nickolas Ashford-Valerie Simpson)

Produced by Nickolas Ashford and Valerie Simpson

Track recorded April 22, 1970; groups recorded May 7; strings added at Studio B, May 8;
additional overdubs recorded at Studio B, May 11; additional or new strings added at Studio B, May 12, 1970

18. Where Would I Be Without You, Baby *The Supremes and Four Tops*

(Clay McMurray-Marty Coleman)

Produced by Clay McMurray

Track recorded January 11, 1971; additional overdubs recorded at Studio B, January 14;
strings added at Studio B, January 25; horns overdubbed January 29, 1971

Tamla Motown TMG 836, November 1972

Another pair of covers: the A-side was a re-cut of Diana Ross' debut solo single that had been featured on *The Magnificent Seven*, one of the rare singles to feature solo lines from Mary Wilson and Cindy Birdsong. The flip side — not to be confused with "Where Would I Be Without You," a 1968 single by Barbara McNair — had been included on *The Return Of The Magnificent Seven*. It seemed like a new tune at the time, but Clay McMurray had already produced a Bobby Taylor version in 1969. Taylor's version was not issued until 2006, on Taylor's 2-CD set *The Motown Anthology*.

19. So Deep Within You

(Mike Pinder)

Produced by Tony Clarke

Arranged by Arthur Greenslade

Tamla Motown TMG 850, March 1973

Another release from the May 5, 1970, London session that produced "Simple Game" and "You Stole My Love," "So Deep Within You" was issued well after the group had left Motown. A cover of a Moody Blues track, it had appeared on a various artists LP, *The Motown Sound Volume One*, a month earlier. The B-side for the 45-rpm release was "(Happy) Is A Bumpy Road" (see track 4 on this disc).

Writer and keyboardist Mike Pinder sang the original version on the Moody Blues' album *On The Threshold Of A Dream*, issued in 1969.

20. I Am Your Man

(Nickolas Ashford-Valerie Simpson)

Produced by Frank Wilson

Track recorded June 2, 1971;
instrumental overdubs recorded June 5;
background vocals recorded at Studio B, June 24;
lead vocal recorded at Studio B, June 29 and July 28;
additional background vocals recorded at Studio B, July 30;
lead vocal re-recorded at Studio B, September 28 and October 15, and at Studio A, October 19;
strings and horns recorded in Los Angeles on unknown date; lead re-recorded December 16, 1971

Tamla Motown TMG 858, B-side of "I Can't Quit Your Love," June 1973

"I Am Your Man" was plucked from the LP *Nature Planned It* to back "I Can't Quit Your Love," which had already been issued in the U.S. the year before.

The Italian Singles

With the European market opening its arms to "The Sound Of Young America," Berry Gordy initially had his artists record German versions of their hits, but the Four Tops were not part of that first wave. Later, Gordy included Spanish and, more widely, Italian language versions in his global vision for the company. The Tops cut three tunes, as below; all were included in a rare promotional LP Motown pressed exclusively for the Italian media.

21. Piangono Gli Uomini (I Can't Help Myself (Sugar Pie, Honey Bunch))

(Brian Holland-Lamont Dozier-Edward Holland Jr., Italian lyrics by Corrado Bonicatti and Antonio Latessa)

Produced by Brian Holland and Lamont Dozier; Italian overdub produced by Peter Ricci

Track recorded March 31, 1965; overdubs recorded April 8; strings and other overdubs recorded April 9, 1965; Italian vocals recorded December 13, 1966

Italian title roughly translates as "The Men Cry" or "The Cry Of A Man"

Tamla Motown TM8005, April 1967 (The B-side was the English version of "Bernadette")

22. Gira, Gira (Reach Out I'll Be There)

(Brian Holland-Lamont Dozier-Edward Holland Jr., Italian lyrics by Cassia/Cenci)

Produced by Brian Holland and Lamont Dozier; Italian overdub produced by Peter Ricci

Track recorded July 8, 1966; various overdubs recorded July 21; Italian lead vocal overdubbed December 7; Italian group vocals recorded December 8, 1966

Italian title roughly translates as "It Turns, It Turns" or "Round And Round"

Tamla Motown TM8014, April 1967 (The B-side was a repeat of "Piangono Gli Uomini")

23. L'Arcobaleno (Walk Away Renee)

(Mike Lookofsky-Bob Calilli-Tony Sansone, Italian lyrics by Paolo Dossena)

Produced by Brian Holland and Lamont Dozier; Italian overdub producer unknown

Track recorded October 6, 1966; strings recorded October 8; Italian lead vocal overdub recorded March 27, 1968; Italian group overdub recorded March 28, 1968

Italian title roughly translates as "The Rainbow"

Tamla Motown TM8025, 1968 (The B-side was the English version of "You Keep Running Away")

Compilation produced by Harry Weinger
Mastered by Kevin Reeves at Republic Studios, New York
Tape vault research and A&R assistance: Andrew Skurow
Thanks to Ellen Fitton and David Yellen

All tracks recorded at Hitsville U.S.A. Studio, Detroit, except as otherwise noted.
All mini-essays edited with additional material by Harry Weinger, from the original research and authorship by Keith Hughes and Bill Dahl created for *The Complete Motown Singles* series.
All recording annotations from the original Hitsville U.S.A. studio logs, curated for this collection by Mr. Hughes.

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Chart information courtesy of *Billboard* magazine. The R&B Chart numbers marked * are from *Cash Box* magazine, during the 14-month period that *Billboard* did not publish a separate R&B/Soul listing.

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DISC 1

1. Baby I Need Your Loving
2. Call On Me
3. Without The One You Love (Life's Not Worthwhile)
4. Love Has Gone
5. Ask The Lonely
6. Where Did You Go
7. I Can't Help Myself (Sugar Pie, Honey Bunch)
8. Sad Souvenirs
9. I Can't Help Myself (Sugar Pie, Honey Bunch) [second version]
10. It's The Same Old Song
11. Your Love Is Amazing
12. It's The Same Old Song [second version]
13. Something About You
14. Darling, I Hum Our Song
15. Shake Me, Wake Me (When It's Over)
16. Just As Long As You Need Me
17. Loving You Is Sweeter Than Ever
18. I Like Everything About You
19. Reach Out I'll Be There
20. Until You Love Someone
21. Standing In The Shadows Of Love
22. Since You've Been Gone
23. Bernadette
24. I Got A Feeling
25. 7-Rooms Of Gloom
26. I'll Turn To Stone
27. You Keep Running Away
28. If You Don't Want My Love

DISC 2

1. Walk Away Renee
2. Your Love Is Wonderful
3. If I Were A Carpenter
4. Wonderful Baby
5. Yesterday's Dreams
6. For Once In My Life
7. I'm In A Different World
8. Remember When
9. What Is A Man
10. Don't Bring Back Memories
11. Don't Let Him Take Your Love From Me
12. The Key
13. It's All In The Game
14. Love (Is The Answer)
15. Still Water (Love)
16. Still Water (Peace)
17. River Deep - Mountain High
    The Supremes & Four Tops
18. Together We Can Make Such Sweet Music
    The Supremes & Four Tops
19. Just Seven Numbers (Can Straighten Out My Life)
20. I Wish I Were Your Mirror
21. You Gotta Have Love In Your Heart
    The Supremes & Four Tops
22. I'm Glad About It
    The Supremes & Four Tops
23. You Gotta Have Love In Your Heart
    The Supremes & Four Tops
    [stereo promo version]
24. In These Changing Times
25. Right Before My Eyes
26. MacArthur Park (Part 2)
27. MacArthur Park (Part 1)

DISC 3

1. A Simple Game [U.S. version]
2. L.A. (My Town)
3. I Can't Quit Your Love
4. Happy (Is A Bumpy Road)
5. (It's The Way) Nature Planned It
6. I'll Never Change

Bonus Tracks:
The U.K.-only Singles

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9. Can't Seem To Get You Out Of My Mind
10. Simple Game [U.K. version]
11. You Stole My Love
12. It's Got To Be A Miracle (This Thing Called Love)
    The Supremes and Four Tops
13. Without The One You Love (Life's Not Worth While)
    The Supremes and Four Tops
14. Let's Make Love Now
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